



# NEWS RELEASE

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and  
Consumer Protection  
and  
Wisconsin Department of Health Services



## Three cases of listeriosis in Wisconsin part of multistate outbreak linked to pre-packaged caramel apples

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MADISON – Illnesses occurring in three Wisconsin residents are included in an ongoing multistate outbreak of listeriosis associated with commercially-produced, pre-packaged caramel apples, according to Wisconsin's Departments of Health Services (DHS) and Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). To date, 28 outbreak-related illnesses including 4 deaths have occurred among residents of 10 states.

The specific producer of the caramel apples has not been determined. As a result, consumers should not eat any commercially-produced, pre-packaged caramel apples, including those containing nuts, sprinkles, chocolate, or other toppings, until further notice. Contaminated commercially-produced, pre-packaged caramel apples may still be for sale at grocery stores and other points of food service. These products could have a shelf life exceeding one month.

DATCP, DHS, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are investigating the ongoing outbreak, including tracing the source of the contaminated product.

Listeriosis is a life-threatening infection caused by eating food contaminated with the bacterium *Listeria monocytogenes*. It is particularly dangerous for pregnant women and their newborns, young children, frail or elderly people, and others with weakened immune systems. Healthy persons with listeriosis often experience diarrhea and fever. Persons who believe they may have become ill with listeriosis should contact their health care provider.

Based on available information, consumers should dispose of any commercially-produced, pre-packaged caramel apples in a sealed trash can to prevent other people and animals from eating them.

No evidence links illnesses to homemade caramel apples.

For additional information about *Listeria monocytogenes* outbreaks, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/listeria/outbreaks/index.html>.